

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-25

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TAGS: EEC, MO, TS, AG

SUBJECT: EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING FEBRUARY 4-5:

MEDITERRANEAN POLICY - GENERAL DISCUSSION

REF: A) EC BRUSSELS 473; B) EC BRUSSELS 829; C) EC BRUSSELS

791; D) EC BRUSSELS 0772

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1. SUMMARY; ALTHOUGH THE EC COUNCIL GAVE NO NEW NEGOTIATING MANDATE TO THE COMMISSION, THE COUNCIL DISCUSSION ON FEBRUARY 5 COVERED ALL OUTSTANDING TRADE ASSOCIATION ISSUES OF MEDITERRANEAN POLICY (TRADE RECIPROCITY ISSUES INVOLVING THE MAGHREB WERE REPORTED SEPARATELY IN REFTEL D). THE KEY TO A NEW MANDATE WILL BE AGREEMENT ON FURTHER AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS TO BE OFFERED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES. THE DISCUSSION PRODUCED THE FIRST INDICATION IN MONTHS OF SOME MOVEMENT BY THE MEMBER STATES. END SUMMARY.

2. GENERAL ISSUES. DESPITE NO AGREEMENT ON A NEW MANDATE FOR THE COMMISSION, THE EC COUNCIL DISCUSSION OF MEDITERRANEAN POLICY DISCLOSED SOME EVOLUTION IN MEMBER STATE POSITIONS AFTER A NUMBER OF MONTHS OF RELATIVE INACTIVITY. THERE WAS ONLY A SHORT DISCUSSION OF THE AD HOC TRADE MEASURES INSTITUTED BY THE NEW MEMBER STATES SINCE JANUARY 1, 1974 (REFTEL D). MOST DELEGATIONS AGREED THAT THE COUNCIL SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON DEVELOPING A REVISED MANDATE FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF DEFINITIVE AGREEMENTS. THE DISCUSSION ON SPECIFIC ISSUES IS DESCRIBED BELOW.

3. AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS. THE ALGERIAN WINE QUESTION WHICH IS BLOCKING AGREEMENT ON OTHER AGRICULTURAL CONCESSIONS WAS NOT SOLVED BY THE MINISTERS. VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS WERE DISCUSSED INCONCLUSIVELY. EC COMMISSIONER CHEYSSON, APPARENTLY BACKED BY COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SOAMES, SPOKE OUT STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF GREATER FLEXIBILITY BY THE MEMBER STATES IN GRANTING CONCESSIONS ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

4. INDUSTRIAL CONCESSIONS. EXCEPT FOR THE UK DELEGATION, THE MEMBER STATES APPEAR PREPARED TO ACCEPT A LENGTHENED TRANSITION PERIOD FOR MOVING TO FREE TRADE IN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS WITH SPAIN AND ISRAEL. MOST OF THE DISCUSSION OF INDUSTRIAL CONCESSIONS WAS RELATED TO REFINED PETROLEUM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRODUCTS AND COOPERATION IN THE CRUDE PETROLEUM SECTOR. WHILE THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON THE NEED TO INCREASE THE CEILINGS FOR IMPORTS OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS FROM ALGERIA AND TUNISIA, THE DUTCH RESERVED THEIR POSITION ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE SITUATION NEEDED TO BE RE-EVALUATED ON THE BASIS OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS INCLUDING THE CURRENT COMMUNITY DISCUSSION OF

ENERGY POLICY AND THE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN OIL
REVENUES TO ALGERIA.

5. FINANCIAL COOPERATION. THE DISCUSSION WAS
PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH THE FORM OF FINANCIAL AID
(HARD/SOFT LOANS, GRANTS) FOR THE MAGHREB COUNTRIES.
THERE WAS NO DECISION ON THE LEVEL OF AID.
THE UK, BUT NOT THE DUTCH, WITHDREW
THEIR RESERVE WHEREBY THEY HAD LINKED AGREEMENTS ON
FINANCIAL COOPERATION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES
WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COOPERATION FRAMEWORK
AND FUND FOR COUNTRIES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE EC.
MYERSON

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